

By any measure, 2016 was a remarkable year.

Yet, however turbulent the headlines, and whatever the potential distractions – including the summer's Euro 2016 tournament and Rio Olympic Games, in which Team GB finished second in the medals table – cinemagoing once again proved to be a robust escape from it all.

With 1% of the world's population, the UK accounted for 5% of world cinema box-office receipts and 21% of box-office receipts in Europe.

Overview: An intensely competitive, buoyant, dynamic marketplace

The *range* of attractive film releases, spread throughout the year and brought persuasively to market, meant that the huge, resilient cinema box-office again topped £1.3 billion (including around a quarter of a billion pounds of VAT).

No fewer than 12 of 2016's releases grossed more than £30 million at the box-office, vs. 8 in 2015.

The top 11 film releases of 2016 are placed in the UK's all-time top 100 hits (as at 5 January 2017).

In the UK, business in 2016 finished broadly level-pegging with 2015, which had posted a new box-office record with the 4th highest number of cinema visits in the multiplex era (i.e. since the mid-1980s). 2016's UK admissions total of 168.25m is the 8th highest in the 21st century to date, broadly maintaining the welcome buoyancy of recent years despite a year-on-year dip of 2.1%. But exactly what appealed to audiences, and to what extent, was as tough to predict as ever.



Warner Bros.

Human. Nature: A fresh, modern take on Edgar Rice Burroughs' century-old story of a boy raised by apes after his parents' death in Africa, *The Legend of Tarzan* had its European premiere in London's Leicester Square on 5 July. It was a British-made adventure, filmed largely at Leavesden Studios by director David Yates, whose *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* opened four months later (see page 31). Alexander Skarsgård starred as Tarzan/John Clayton alongside Margot Robbie as his wife Jane, Samuel L. Jackson and Christoph Waltz. 2016 was a break-out year for Margot Robbie, who was also seen in *Suicide Squad*, *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* and, briefly, *The Big Short*. Alexander Skarsgård himself starred as a corrupt cop in another, very different, 2016 release, the latest comedy from London-born writer / director John Michael McDonagh, *War on Everyone* (below).



Icon

Release markets for UK film distributors as rights-holders

Cinema admissions (number of visits)	2016	2015
UK	168,259,894 <i>(average 3.25m per week)</i>	171,930,400
Republic of Ireland	15,782,328	15,172,461
Malta	651,674	676,217
Total admissions	184,693,896	187,779,078

Gross box-office receipts (value of ticket sales in sterling)	2016 (53 weeks)	2015 (52 weeks)
UK	£1,246,593,601	£1,235,544,731
Republic of Ireland	£91,177,680	£76,166,223
Malta	£4,075,771	£4,009,305
Total box-office	£1,341,847,052	£1,315,720,259



StudioCanal



Lionsgate

Market dynamics

Cinemagoing is *product-driven*, as ever, depending largely on the films available and the extent to which they connect with audiences. Box-office revenues self-evidently flow in as distributors' campaigns roll out and films open on screens.

Cinema audiences engage with *characters* and *stories* (generally more so, today, than 'stars'), so *properties*, especially those with the potential to develop as franchises, are all-important. As you can see in the chart on page 32 (and as is typically the case), most of the year's top releases were part of pre-existing franchises or familiar media properties.

Audiences also crave premium *experiences*, both for personal fulfilment and to share with others. In 2016 the average weekly spend on cinema tickets in the UK/Ireland was £25m, but ranged widely, according to the available film choice, between a low of £12.9m and a high of almost four times as much, £48.6m (see page 58).

Market development: The box-office for the top 40 films in 2016 (out of 900 releases) was greater than the *entire* UK/Ireland box-office (all 505 releases) back in 2006.

In 2016, the BBFC classified more films for theatrical release than in any other year of the last half-century.

Brilliantly executed: British stars Idris Elba and Jason Statham led the casts of high-octane contemporary thrillers – Idris Elba in *Bastille Day* as a CIA agent ensnared with Richard Madden's pickpocket in Paris on what develops into a dangerous case of high-level corruption; Jason Statham reprising one of his signature action roles in *Mechanic: Resurrection* with Jessica Alba and Tommy Lee Jones on magnificent locations in Rio, Sydney, the Balkans and Bangkok. In addition to appearing on screen in *Bastille Day*, *100 Streets* and *Star Trek Beyond*, Idris Elba participated in three further 2016 releases, voicing different animal characters in *Zootropolis*, *The Jungle Book* and *Finding Dory*.